

Indiana Bike Trails Task Force

December 6, 2017

Meeting Notes

The second meeting of the Indiana Bike Trails Task Force occurred on December 6, 2017 at approximately 10:00 am at the White River Gardens at the Indianapolis Zoo in Indianapolis, Indiana.

Meeting attendees included, Kyle Hannon (Chairperson), Paul Grayson (Vice Chairperson), Pete Fritz, , Andrew Forrester, Rep. Carey Hamilton (via phone), Rep. Wes Culver, Mitch Barloga, Dean Peterson, Bruce Kimball, Kara Kish, Jeff Smallwood, Vince Griffin (via phone), Rebecca Holwerda, Justin Schneider, Jay Mitchell (representing INDOT Commissioner Joe McGuinness). Amy Marisavljevic, and Noelle Szydlyk.

Kyle Hannon, task force chairman, opened the meeting with a short welcome and a few remarks. Chairman Hannon's first order of business was to thank Paul Grayson for hosting the group at the Zoo. Paul then welcomed everyone to the Hulman River House.

HOUSEKEEPING ITEMS

Kyle Hannon provided direction to the exits, as well as the restroom locations due to the use of a new facility for the meeting. Hannon also drew attention to the thorough September meeting minutes.

TASK FORCE CHARGE AND VISION

Kyle Hannon, Task Force Chairman, shared a quick overview of the plan for the meeting and reviewed the intent of the task force. He shared the Task Force's directive is to facilitate and connect trails across the state and to facilitate and connect funding opportunities available while addressing safety concerns.

FORMATION OF THE FUNDING AND SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEES

Hannon then asked the group, "What can we do to stand out?" In addition he asked, "How can we be a leader for other states to follow?: Hannon shared that the committee continues to work with an aggressive timeline to meet the goals that have already been set. In order to achieve these goals, two sub-committees have been created. Hannon reviewed the survey results for those that responded and divided the group accordingly. Division of the task force into the two sub-committees was done intently to assure good representation among the various groups. He also shared that Task Force members have the opportunity to switch if they truly don't like their placement or to serve on both committees if they are interested.

FUNDING SUB-COMMITTEE

Chairman Hannon transitioned to the next point on the agenda. Hannon shared that Amy Marisavljevic agreed to chair the fundraising sub-committee. Paul Grayson then outlined the deliverables that were provided to the new committee. The list of deliverables was distributed at the meeting.

The first was to identify current sources of funding that can assist with trail development and/or trail maintenance. Marisavljevic reviewed what had already been done by DNR in this area. She identified current funding sources for the group that are already in play and available to those that qualify. These current sources include but are not limited to:

- State Grants
- Federal Grants
- State Administered Funds
- Community Foundations
- Private Public Partnerships
- City and County funds

Marisavljevic hopes that the list that she had created previously would provide a good starting point for the group.

Hannon transitioned the group to think about the next deliverable for the funding sub-committee. Developing at least six innovative funding ideas. Discussion of this subject and the nature of its inclusion in the Indiana code surrounding the creation of the Bike Trails Task Force.

FUNDING DISCUSSION

Jeff Smallwood commented that traditional funding sources are becoming much more prevalent and easier to identify. His question to the group leadership was whether or not the legislature would hold the task force's feet to the fire on being innovative. He also asked, "How innovative do we have to be?" Rep. Culver was asked to respond and clarify how open the legislature would be to our innovative ideas.

Representative Culver responded that he is not optimistic the legislature will designate a line item for trails in the state budget. He did feel a request to the legislature would also need to be creative in nature to be considered. Regardless if it is a reallocation of an existing tax or fee to a new program. An example provided by Culver was the relocation of the Tire Recycling Fund to support trails. This is a creative way to take money that is already being collected and direct it to a new program since the current need to provide funds to recycle tires may no longer be needed. Marisavljevic also asked Culver if the legislature would consider a new fee or tax to create a trail development fund. Culver felt this is not likely but if tied to a health issue like a cigarette tax, a trail fund could get a portion of those dollars. Culver shared there would still be hurdles to navigate as not all legislators are on board and many have different reasons for where money should be allocated.

Throughout the discussion, many members of the group shared various creative funding ideas, made suggestions for sources for options (other states) and also asked questions of those ideas that were proposed.

Kara Kish shared her definition of "creative funding" with the group. She defined them as existing funds that are not traditionally used for trail development. These could be economic development funds that would normally support other activities. Kish feels that we need to create tools that will convince local communities to direct specific funds toward trail development.

Bruce Kimball suggested the group invite a gentleman from Michigan down when the group is ready to talk specifics. He feels he could be a great asset to the fundraising committee about private grants and foundations and how to engage them in trail development projects.

Kyle Hannon provided another possible example of redirecting an existing tax. He suggested the group look at user based taxes and how we could find one to direct toward trails. Much like the gas tax is used to fund road development in Indiana. Users of the roads fund the road work.

Hannon would also like the committee to look at ways to fund maintenance for existing trails. Mitch Barloga agreed. Barloga said there is a trail maintenance account set up, but it currently is lacking funds to do any real work. He estimated \$2 million per year would support a trail maintenance fund. He also commented that this group needs to show potential funders the impact of the trails on their community and the true need for the fund to keep them maintained.

Rep. Culver shared with the group that the legislature is moving in the right direction and leaning collectively toward more trail development. But they are moving slowly. They are aware there is evidence

of economic return on trails but they are still cautious of residents and respectful of their space (land ownership). While this was a high concern initially, it is lowering.

Other committee members provided feedback and research as to why legislators and governments are leaning toward health and wellness. There is proven economic benefit, productivity increases, there is a greater quality of life among residents and the local business communities are demanding trails for economic development to continue.

Another question was posed by task force member Dean Peterson of Marian University. Dean asked if there are existing trails connecting larger trails to communities, schools, etc.? He felt a connection could provide increased maintenance (collective fund among users) and increased health and wellness for a larger number of people.

Kish responded with information on the Safe Route to Schools and Safe Route to Parks programs already in place. These are national programs. Terre Haute Parks and Rec is participating in the Safe Routes to parks pilot program in their area.

Hannon commented that Indiana is often still playing catch up to other states in areas like this.

SAFETY SUB-COMMITTEE

Hannon transitioned from funding to safety to introduce the Safety Sub-committee and their role. The main questions being posed of the Safety Sub-committee are as follows:

- Where do you ride? Do you feel safe?
- What types of roads do you ride on? Do you prefer a shared system of trail or a separated system? What is better?

Hannon shared that Pete Fritz with the Indiana State Department of Health would lead the committee. Fritz shared the tasks and deliverables required of the committee and notes on how he sees the committee completing them. First the committee would identify the issues that are facing trail users. It seems that safety is the overriding issue of trail users whether on bicycle or pedestrian. The ISDH is currently reviewing safety concerns specifically injury and accident reports involving cyclists. Their plan is to bring all the statistics together to show on a map where these accidents occur, where they are being reported and use that map to fill in the gaps. ISDH hopes to have this ready to review by the end of the first quarter 2018 or around the time of the next Bike Trails meeting.

One task of the sub-committee is to create a survey of existing regulations. Fritz has already compiled what is in state statute. He will have that available for the sub-committee to review. This information can be used to see where there are gaps, which is well defined versus what regulations are grey and hazy.

Additionally Fritz plans to bring local and regional advocacy groups that regularly review bike and trail safety issues to share what is happening nationally and what best practices are already in place. Fritz will do a scan and compile what is already being done so the group can focus on new ideas around the topic.

SAFETY DISCUSSION

Jeff Smallwood asked about the deliverable in the handouts related to creating a database of accident and crash related info. His question was focused on whether current data distinguishes between roads and trails and where the accident truly occurred. Fritz responded that EMS data and crash reports are the best way to acquire this type of information. It isn't currently in one concise database. It is often that a GPS coordinate is listed or the nearest cross streets and not an actual trail therefore it is tough to quantify the number of trail related incidents. He shared that one often has to dig further into the report to determine where the crash occurred.

Throughout the discussion, many members of the group shared various questions and suggestions for focus areas for the safety sub-committee. The first suggestion was provided by Kara Kish.

Kish suggested the Bike Trails Task Force might serve to champion a protocol for how police or EMS report bike or trail related crashes. Creating something more consistent that could be used statewide. Jay Mitchell responded that INDOT is working on something similar to this to be able to provide better data that is more organized.

Paul Grayson asked if there is a national organization with the data and benchmarks that we should look to in order to create a more "apples to apples" comparison.

Dean Peterson suggested the task force/sub-committee look internationally for data or models that could provide a starting point for protocol or instruction. Fritz shared that while many urban international locations have higher populations of bicycle riders, their crash ratings are often lower than US cities of comparable size because motorists are used to them.

At this point, Kyle Hannon called for any additional comment and no comment was provided. Hannon transitioned to further discussion on the survey that was distributed to the task force via email prior to the meeting.

SURVEY REVIEW

Hannon shared that the survey results were provided in the packet for the group to review. There was high interest from respondents to start with existing trails and connect them to others rather than starting something from scratch. There was also higher interest in creating separate, off-road, complete trails (made of crushed stone or pavement) rather than those connected to roadways. Paul Grayson provided an example of combo trail, made for mixed use and some but not all separated from the roadway. The Nickel Plate Trail.

TASK FORCE VISION

From this point forward, the task force had an open discussion about the vision of the group and how to get there. The vision was expressed as both a technical piece (what do we want to do) and a storytelling piece (how do we tell the story and what do we want people to know/learn/gain).

The conversation transitioned to discussion of the Visionary Trails Map provide by DNR. Grayson shared that map shows good progress in the northern part of the state. However he feels the bigger challenge and therefore greater opportunity is to do something in the southern part of the state. This would be new trail, with the intent of being connected to the northern trails. Grayson also expressed support for connecting the existing systems of trails regardless of the "best" or easiest way to connect. He felt there were many ways to create new opportunities for communities along the trail.

Marisavljevic explained the colors and distinctions on the Visionary Trails map. She shared there are 426 miles of visionary trail that provide a good opportunity to complete. She felt these trails provide a head start because they already have a community working on them. She also feels they are a lot more feasible than creating a brand new trail.

The study that was done by the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands at Indiana University in Bloomington, IN was brought to the discussion. They are doing a refresh to the initial study that was previously completed. Grayson suggested bringing someone from the institute to meet with our group to review their research and findings.

Mitch Barloga suggested the task force should focus on smaller communities the opportunity to understand what other communities of their size have already done and how it worked. In response to this, Justin Schneider asked if there were case studies out there that document how smaller communities get the buy in from land owners and create the public dialog and work with their local legislatures. It was suggested at the meeting in September that the task force look to facilitate this type of education through a tool kit.

Marisavljevic suggested the task force continue to work with INDOT as they develop the statewide bike pedestrian plan. Jay Mitchell confirmed that there will be some benefits to the task force as a result of this plan. That plan is still under development.

Mitchell made the suggestion that the task force focus on the American Discovery Trail North that is about 50% complete from Richmond to outside of Chicago. There are many sections of trail but the connections still need to be made.

Grayson offered that the best opportunity for the task force to get private investment is to develop an idea that is big and bold. He said, small ideas demand small dollars. A transformative project that would benefit the entire state is needed. He restated his interest in looking to the southern portion of the state and making it a true bucket list national travel destination.

Kyle Hannon kept the discussion moving by asking another question of the group. Do we do the project because it is based more on connectivity and benefit to the community and not because of the ease or feasibility due to existing railroad corridors? How do we nurture the next big idea? In addition, how do we connect what has already been done?

In response, Dean Peterson offered this idea. To use the vision statement to connect communities and provide longtime leadership. Peterson followed up with the idea that the vision provides direction to communities both large and small. He felt it was hard to create ideas for funding or raising money without the vision as to where it was going. Peterson provided many ideas as to what could be connected:

- Safety
- School involvement
- Health and wellness initiatives
- Economic Growth
- Fundraising
- Action plans for fund usage
- Encouragement to the community/create buy in

Kara Kish agreed that local communities need a “carrot” to push toward local investment.

Kyle Hannon redirected the conversation toward development of the written vision statement. He felt the following needed to be addressed.

- Something to articulate what we are looking toward as a task force
- What we want to accomplish
- Something to share with communities and Indiana residents
- A common thread to neatly pull everything together
- Articulate what type of lift this will provide to the state
- Determine what the smaller communities will get out of it
- Connect the dots
- Set something in motion to inspire and empower communities across the state

Paul Grayson added that this vision should create a legacy to the administration. He also shared that this may take a long time to complete. Grayson compared this project to the thought process of those Hoosiers 100 years ago that developed the Indiana State Park System. He feels the group needs to be bold and develop the next mega concept.

Kara Kish suggested a third subcommittee be created to work on the vision statement.

Amy Marisavljevic suggested we brainstorm a list of inspiring words or ideas that could be used to get the vision committee going. The list is below.

- Transformational
- Visionary system that is not set in stone
- Connecting
- Personal
- Part of a bigger thing
- Health
- Wellness
- Community Driven
- Inspirational
- Geographically distinct
- Regional Distinctiveness
- Character
- Access
- Educational (history, math, science, health, wellness, geography)
- Quality of Place
- Quality of Life
- Ownership
- Environmental Stewardship
- Social Equity
- Urban and Rural
- Prosperity
- Diversity of Landscape
- Cultural as well as natural diversity

Paul Grayson also commented to the storytelling portion of the vision statement. He shared the idea of amenities and economic development that could be obtained through this. Everything from restrooms, equipment rental/repair and restaurants along the way to shuttle services, lodging and attractions. Along with economic development, Grayson also feels the group should meet with local colleges and business to determine the deciding factors for attracting and retaining future talent.

Kyle Hannon concluded the conversation by identifying who from the task force would take on this task of pulling the vision together. Mitch Barloga and Kara Kish volunteered to develop a draft. Many task force members offered to participate on a committee. Kish offered to put together a first draft. She planned to create a paragraph about each of the key words to get the ball rolling. Her self-imposed deadline was December 27, 2017.

NEXT STEPS

- Hannon requested a motion to approve the minutes from the September meeting
 - o Mitch Barloga provided the motion
 - o Bruce Kimball second
 - o Meeting minutes were approved.
- Hannon shared the next meeting date and time with the group. March 21, 2018 at 10:00 am.
- Hannon suggested to invite a representative from the MPO Council to come and provide detail on what is happening at the local level. Jay Mitchell offered to follow up since he works with the MPO Council regularly. He would discuss with them and select a few people to attend the next meeting in March. The direct for the MPO council is to share success stories, failures and how they accomplish what they are trying to do.
- Next meeting
 - o Sub-Committees will be asked to report at the next meeting
 - o Draft of the Vision Statement
 - o Invite and have discussion with members of the MPO Council

NEW BUSINESS

Amy Marisavljevic shared information on the Places for Bikes Conference occurring in Indianapolis from May 1-3, 2018. National conference hosted by People for Bikes. Registration for the conference is still open but the early bird deadline has passed.

Mitch Barloga provided a tidbit of information on bike tourism in northern Indiana. He shared that there is a new bike store in Hobart. The owner commented that she has had a handful of new out of state and international visitors to the store. He shared with her that she is on the newly established USBR 36.

ADJOURNMENT

Kyle Hannon asked for a motion to adjourn. Mitch Barloga motioned. Kara Kish provided the second.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 10:41 am.